

# The Sky Line Trail



*Twin Falls, Yoho Valley. Photo by Associated Screen News.*

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Sky Line Trail Hikers  
of the Canadian Rockies.*

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*Yoho Glacier from Look Out Point near Lake Celeste.*

*Photo by George Munson.*

## *Sky Line Trail Hikers' Camp for 1938*

### THE YOH0 HIGH LINE

Four summers ago we had a delightful three day hike through the Yoho Valley, spending two nights at Twin Falls Cabin. For the last two seasons we have adopted the policy of a central camp from which radiating trails offer facilities for different hikes every day with the convenience and economy of one camp to which we can return and enjoy community life round the Campfire. Various alternative suggestions were left for the discretion of a Trail Committee appointed at the Larch Valley Camp, and the unanimous decision was in favour of a Camp on the High Line of the Yoho Valley. The choice of a definite location was left to Captain E. N. Russell, Superintendent of Yoho Park, who has recommended a site close to Summit Lake, which is half way between Yoho Lodge and Emerald Lake, an admirable centre from which to organize hikes north and south along the high line—to the Fossil beds on the slopes of Mount Burgess, or to the snowy moraine of the Yoho Glacier, or to the bird-haunted Alpine meadows of the Little Yoho Valley.

The Yoho Valley was explored first by Tom Wilson, most celebrated of guides in the Canadian Rockies, who explored its recesses while

hunting for horses that had strayed from the C. P. R. Construction Camp at the time when James Ross was locating the transcontinental line through Kicking Horse Pass. From the High Line in the Yoho Valley, Tom went through the gap past Summit Lake and discovered over the ridge the lovely vista of Emerald Lake.

The present road from Field to Emerald Lake follows the route of an Indian trail made by the Kooteney Indians who used the lake area as a secret corral for their horses when pressed by their hereditary enemies, the Piegans. The names in the Yoho Valley are, however, Cree Indian, and this was evidently one of the Cree hunting grounds.

Although the High Line Trail in the Yoho Valley may already be known to some of our members, it opens up such magnificent vistas that there are few who do not wish to revisit it again and again. Artists have painted it, authors have written about it, one distinguished American composer, Louis Victor Saar, has introduced it into a symphonic tone poem. Among the descriptions of the view across the Yoho Valley from the High Line Trail, one of the most vivid appears in a book published in





# TRAILS Yoho Park

accessible from  
Sky Line Trail Hiker's Camp  
August 5-8  
1938



1924 by the Macmillan Company by B. W. Mitchell, entitled *Trail Life in the Canadian Rockies*. Here is an extract from what he says:

"As we drew above the tree tops an involuntary cry of delight broke from the throat of each. The peerless Yoho was before us, deep carven in the eternal hills. For nearly thirty-five hundred feet the gorge falls away clear to the valley floor. Across the valley gleams the giant Daly glacier issuing from a mighty snowfield, pierced to right and left by huge black peaks, and stretching away, away, away, beyond the Wahputiks, to give birth there to that cataract of ice, the Bow Glacier, and to Bow Lake and the river of the awful muskegs.

I can conceive of nothing outside of the Himalayas grandeur than the view across the Yoho Valley from the point at which we had arrived. True, there are higher mountains than these; but on the roof of the world why stop to think of the few chimney stacks that rise above it? In the Canadian Rockies, latitude and altitude work together for magnificence of glaciation. Opposite, across the valley's green depths, Daly pierces with its black sugarloaf a vast field of snow, the névé of the Daly Glacier. The wonderful mass of viscous, slow-flowing ice, in sharp blue contrast to the dazzling white of its parent snows, crowns the cliff that helps to wall in the Yoho and dips down in two branches. The one to the left forms a formidable hanging glacier, avalanching often with the crash of cannon and known as the Minto Ice Cascade. The other branch pours into a glacier-bowl of astonishing dimensions. From the ice grotto at its foot issued a great gush of turbid water carrying in suspension the powdery detritus of the very girders of the Earth's frame, the "exceeding small" grindings of the Mills of the Gods. It is Takakkaw, another bit of poetic Indian nomenclature, "Behold how beautiful." The greenish flood, a river in volume, pours with terrific force from the glacier's mouth, plunges nearly three hundred feet to a shelf in the perpendicular wall of the precipice, gathers irresistible strength and then leaps wildly far out from the cliff, eleven hundred feet of sheer fall, to break to watery atoms on the talus below. The roar surges across the valley in mighty billows of sound. Rainbows gleam in graceful arches when the sunshine plays on the whirling clouds of misty spray; or if, happily, a strong gale be blowing down the valley from Wapta glacier at its head, the splendid column of water slowly, majestically oscillates—right, left; right, left—a Titanic pendulum beating the slow seconds of geologic time. It has been my fortune to see this wonderful cataract under all conditions, at flood in blazing sunlight, a curtain of gale-blown spray, and beating time as a gigantic metronome through blinding clouds of

driving snow. Such glimpses of cosmic energy are thrilling. Two of the mightiest geological forces, ice and water, were at work there before our eyes, tearing away, rending, destroying, to build in the waste again a thousand miles away. And unmoved by the processes of a world in the making, a brown-and-gold butterfly, living its tiny span in joy, poised feasting upon a blue erigeron at the cliff's brink and slowly waved its lustrous wings. Happy little butterfly, unlearned to read the lesson of it all!"

## YOHO PLACE NAMES

(from *Place Names in the Southern Rockies*  
by James White, F.R.S.C.)

YOHO	—Cree Indian word signifying "Astonishment"
Mt. Kiwetinok (Pass & Creek)	—Cree Indian word signifying "on the North Side" (of the Kicking Horse)
Mt. Kerr	—named after Robert Kerr, former passenger traffic manager, C.P.R.
Mt. President	—named after Lord Shaughnessy, then President
Mt. Vice-President	—named after D. McNicoll, then Vice-President, C.P.R.
Mt. Habel	—named after Dr. Jean Habel, celebrated Alpinist. Renamed "des Poilus".
Mt. Pollinger	—named after Joseph Pollinger, Swiss Guide who made first ascents of President, Vice-President and other peaks.
Mt. McArthur	—named after J. J. McArthur, D.L.S., International Boundary Surveys, Dept. of Interior
Mt. Whaleback	—named from its shape
Mt. Daly (and Glacier)	—named after the late Judge Charles F. Daly, President, American Geographical Society (1864-99)
Waputik	—Stoney Indian for "White Goat"
Wapta	—Stoney Indian for "River"
Mount Balfour	—named after John Hutton Balfour (1808-84)—Scottish botanist.
Mount Trollinder	—Norwegian for "Witch's peak"—so named from its resemblance to a mountain of the same name in the Valley of Romsdalen.
Mount Niles	—named after Prof. W. H. Niles, President of the Appalachian Mountain club.
Takakkaw	—Indian for "It is Wonderful"—name suggested by Sir William Van Horne.
Michael Peak	—named after Prof. A. Michael, of Boston, who made first ascents of Mounts Victoria, Lefroy and Gordon.
Mount Burgess	—named after the late A. M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior.
Field	—named after Cyrus West Field (1819-92), promoter of the first Atlantic Cable, who visited the locality in 1884.
Duchesnay (Mountain, Lake and Pass)	—named after the late E. J. Duchesnay, Assistant General Superintendent, C.P.R.
Marpole (Mountain and Lake)	—named after R. Marpole, formerly General Executive Assistant, C.P.R.
Kicking Horse River	—name given by Indians commemorating an accident to Dr. James Hector, geologist of the Palliser Expedition, while surveying the pass through which the river runs.





*Photo by Associated Screen News.*

*Kiwetinoḱ Falls, Little Valley, Mount Kerr in background.*





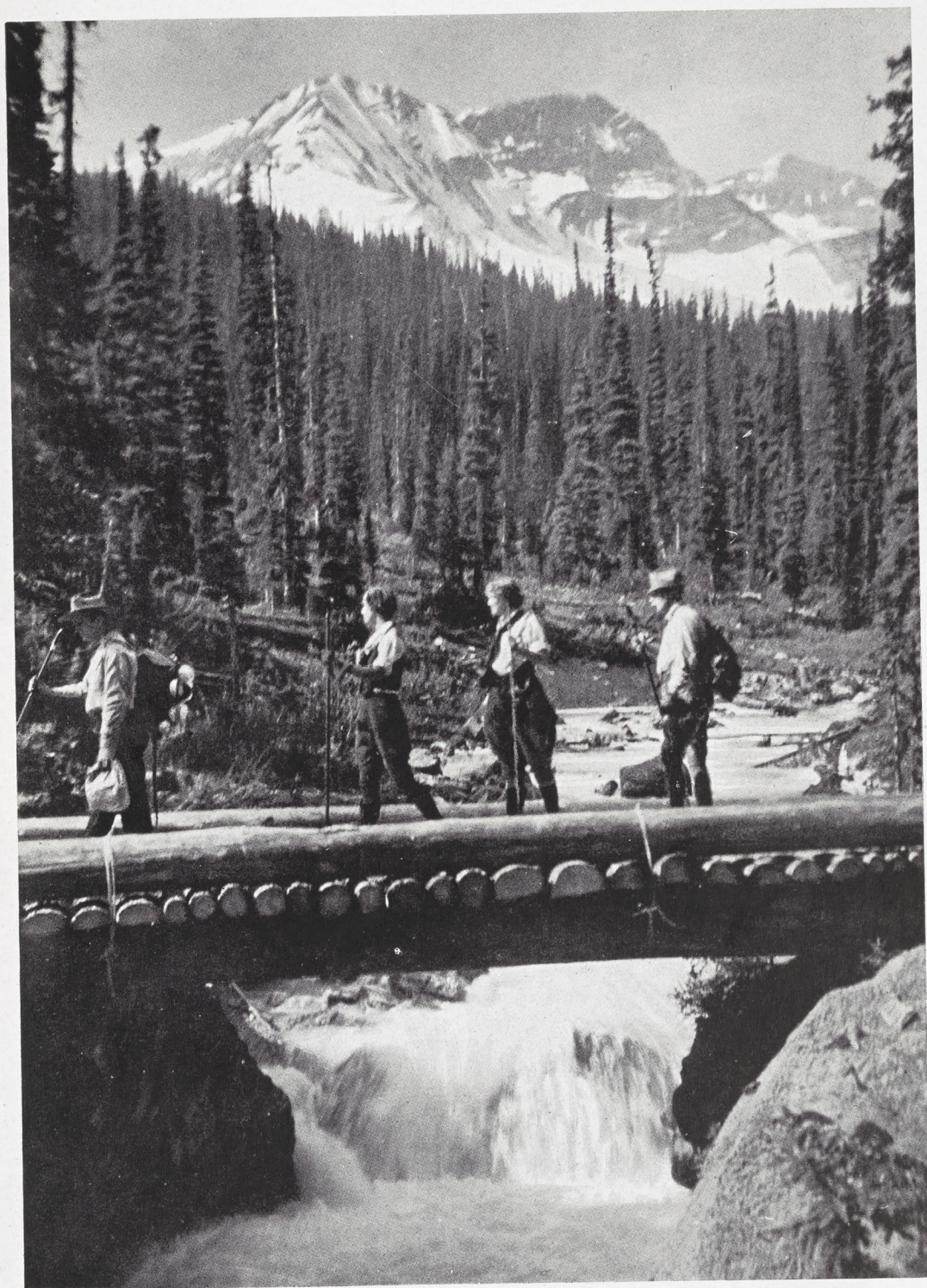
*Summit Lake Cabin, Yoho High Line.*



*The Little Yoho Valley.*

*Photos by Dan McCowan.*





*Crossing the Little Yoho.*

*Photo by R. H. Palenske.*





*Descending from High Line Trail to Yoho Valley Lodge.*



*Mount Cathedral which  
End of the Yo*



*Looking up Little Yoho Valley to President and Kiwetinok Mountains.*





*dominates the Southern  
Yoho Valley.*



*Mount Daly, Mount Miles, and Takahkew Falls from the  
High Line Trail, Yoho Valley.*



*Yoho Glacier at the head of Yoho Valley.*

*Photos by Associated Screen News.*

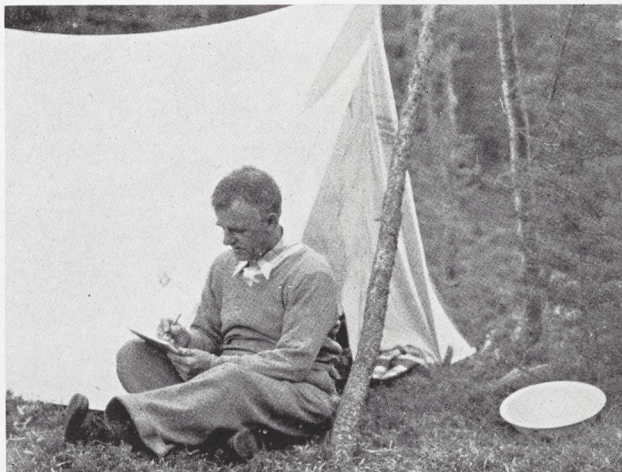


# Traveler's Joy

by

Dan McCowan

"What is this life, if, full of care  
We have no time to stand and stare  
No time to see, when woods we pass,  
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass  
No time to see in broad daylight  
Streams full of stars, like stars at night."



*A chiel among ye, takin' notes.*

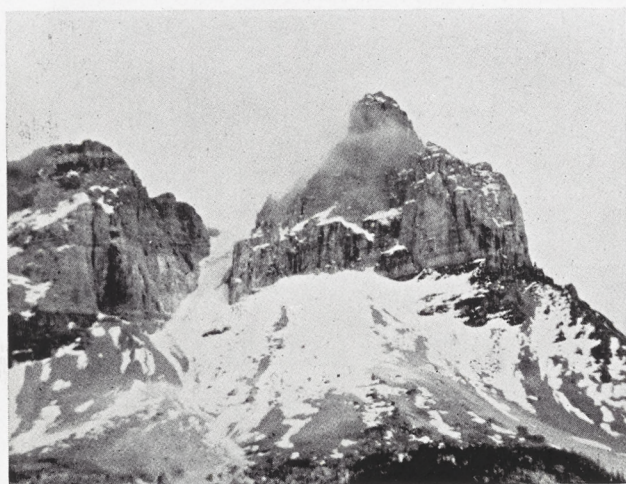
Shuttled to and fro in subway trains, bounced around in buses, jostled on crowded pavements, rocketing and plummeting in high speed elevators, the city dweller looks wistfully forward to holiday time when, in a more primitive environment there will perchance be many leisure hours in which to stand and stare. As a satisfactory place for standing and staring, as well as for Hiking, I can most heartily commend the Yoho Valley in the scenic heart of the Canadian Rockies. Motor-ing through the pleasant woods of the lower valley one does catch glimpses of snow peaks and of flowery uplands, all very beautiful. But the

motorist is denied sight of Point Lace Falls and of tranquil Lake Celeste. Neither may he see the floral splendour of the Alpine Garden of Little Yoho nor marvel at the sunset glow on the spires and gargoyles of Trolltinder.

The hiker is not so restricted. For him, and her, the high trails lead on and on alluringly through quiet green woods fragrant with incense from spruce and fir, across sunny meadows ablaze with flowers and upwards to timberline and beyond, where the clean wind carries the clouds along and blows worldly cares and worries all away. Basking in the lee of a limestone boulder, lulled by the music of a small

cascade, the sky line trail hiker finds much to delight the eye. Nothing is so conducive to utter indolence as watching the shadows of vagrant clouds drift slowly across a mountain landscape. There is a thrill in the sight of an immense avalanche of ice hurtling from a hanging glacier. One never tires of looking at the aerial evolutions of a Golden Eagle as it spirals far overhead. Also there are diminutive things at which the walker may stand and stare,—little birds, tiny plants, minute fossils, most of these being outside the ken of the swift motorist and the galloping rider. May I describe briefly for you some of these lowly forms of life?

Glued to the rocks and stones on slopes that feel the sun are innumerable lichens of various



*Photo by Dan McCowan.*

*Cathedral Mountain from Yoho Valley.*



*The Haunt of  
the Bumble Bee.*



*A Yoho Valley  
Centenarian.*



*Fossils (Brachi-  
opods) on Mount  
Burgess.*

*Photos by Dan McCowan.*



kinds. They are the pioneers of the plant army preparing the way for mosses and ferns, for orchids and lilies, for small shrubs and tall trees. Lichens secrete a strong and penetrating acid which seeps into the hardest limestone and slowly breaks it down to fine sand. Decayed lichens incorporated with the sand provide in turn a primitive seed bed for higher forms of plant life. It is believed that lichens are long lived organisms; certainly they are hardy, being found on the summits of the highest peaks in the Rockies. The Wild Goats of this region eat freely of lichens, scraping the growth from off the rocks by means of lips and tongue. Prior to the discovery of aniline dyes lichens were highly valued in colouring fabrics such as wool and silk. Cotton and linen will not however absorb the dye from these lowly plants. The fine browns and tans of original Harris Tweed were obtained from the acids in lichens. Lichens are still used in making litmus.

In the same rocks to which the living lichens cling, the trail hiker may also discover the petrified forms of creatures which lived at a remote period in the history of this earth. These ancient engravings on stone are not uncommon throughout the Rockies, yet nowhere are they so numerous or so well preserved as on the mountains of Yoho. In fact Mount Stephen appears to have been a Necropolis of Trilobites, the fossil remains of which are embedded there in vast numbers. Trilobites, most primitive form of life yet discovered on this planet, were distantly related to the present day Horse Shoe Crabs. They varied in size from the small ones no larger than a dime, to the greater kinds big enough to cover a silver dollar. Learned geologists tell me that these things lived in the shallow seas some 20 millions of years ago, and I take their word for it. But no one can tell me how these myriads of Trilobites came to their untimely end. Many an inquest has been held in an effort to discover the manner of their taking off. Yet the mystery remains unsolved.

By the margin of many brooks in Yoho Valley are large cushions of green moss some of which are nicely embroidered with small colorful flowers. Kneeling down to drink, the hiker may observe amongst these blooms one that might easily be mistaken for a purple violet, only that the leaves of the plant are different. Of a colour best described as "poisonous" green, the leaves lie flat on the moss in starfish form, and their chief end in life is to catch unwary insects. For this plant is of carnivorous habit and the name of it is Butterwort. The upper surface of the leaf has a greasy appearance, hence the reference to butter. This coating of the leaf is also very sticky forming a natural fly paper in which small bugs and gnats are held fast, and in which they soon die. From the dead insects the Butterwort obtains a supply

of Nitrogen necessary to its continued growth. The plant is common in the Rockies, and I first became acquainted with it in the Grampians of Scotland. There I have heard of the leaves being used in place of rennet for the curdling of milk.

Walking on the High Line Trail in August, one cannot fail to note the activities of the bustling Bumble Bee, one of the few armed insects of which we are quite tolerant. The yellow and black uniform of a stream lined Hornet seems to proclaim the aggressive and arrogant fighter. The soft-toned coat of a Bumble Bee, together with the rounded body and the bass voice inspires confidence, and thus mankind is seldom if ever at enmity with *Bombus*. On one summer day on an Alpine meadow you may observe these bees collecting taxes from Larkspur alone. Tomorrow they may be devoting their entire time to the pendant bells of heather. By reason of this concentration on one species the Bumble Bee is an outstanding specialist in the cross fertilization of plants.

Bumble bees nest in the ground, the small chamber being lined with moss or dry grass. The life of a worker is brief, usually about one month. In late autumn the young Queens, all widowed, burrow into a mossy bank in a shady nook, and there in a torpid state await the coming of Spring. Chief enemies of the Bumble bee are mice and voles which burgle the nests, and a Threadworm parasite which finds lodging within the body.

While there are no poisonous snakes in the Canadian Rockies, the hiker may encounter numerous carnivorous reptiles, all of which however are likewise harmless. Where the trail winds through moist green woods many a squat bodied toad is at home. These warty creatures live to a great age, indeed it is possible that some now resident in Yoho Valley were there before the Canadian Pacific Railway was built, half a century ago. In the tadpole period a toad is entirely vegetarian but when the adult stage is reached there is a reversion from plant to animal food and henceforth the grown reptile is carnivorous. Most of the food is obtained from grubs and insects and thus the creatures are valuable to foresters and farmers. All toads are confirmed "Old Soaks," yet not one ever took a drink. Toads absorb water through the skin only, and it is vital that the skin should be kept moist and pliant, otherwise the reptile would perish. Thus, whilst toads are dry land dwellers, it is imperative that they should from time to time return to the element in which they were hatched.

One might go on and on, telling countless stories of the doings of small creatures which have their homes in the sunny valley of Yoho. It is a pleasant place in summer, a charming place in which to walk leisurely, a place wherein the traveler may take time to stand and stare and find the time well spent.





*Stream above the  
Twin Falls,  
Yoho Valley.*



*Lake Celeste,  
High Line Trail,  
Yoho.*



*An improvised  
bridge.*

*Photo by  
Carl Rungius*





*Twin Falls Cabin, Yoho Valley.*

*Photo by George Munson.*



*Look Out Point, High Line Trail, Yoho Valley.*

*Photo by Carl Runge.*





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Whereas \_\_\_\_\_ has qualified for Life Membership under Section 6 of Article 6 of the By-Laws which reads

*Members holding qualification of 50 miles and upwards may compound their paid and future dues by payment of \$10.00 which shall absolve them from further payment of annual dues, and include a Life Membership Certificate upon the additional payment of \$1.00 but shall not exempt them from special dues or assessments, should such be considered necessary.*

This Certificate is granted to the above mentioned member who has fulfilled all the necessary conditions  
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The new Life Membership Certificate for the Sky Line Trail Hikers designed by R. H. Palenske.



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